



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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"In spite of all dislocations caused by the war, the fishing industry must exert every effort to increase current and future production," Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior and Coordinator of Fisheries said today. "There is now a vital need for every possible pound of fresh, frozen, canned, and otherwise preserved fishery product."

"The President and all war agencies have demanded greater efforts to boost the country's food supplies both for domestic use and that of our Allies," the Coordinator said, "and we must turn to the commercial fisheries. This industry can increase its already great production of protein foodstuffs more rapidly than any other source. Unlike all other foodstuffs, the fish of the sea are there to be taken, if manpower and equipment are available."

The worst problems hampering production in the fisheries at present have resulted from the taking of vessels and the drafting of crew members by Government, and diversion of workers to other industries. At the Coordinator's request, the Office compiled data showing the industry's need for adjustments, and the question of deferment for key men was taken up with the Selective Service System and the War Manpower Commission.

As an example of action taken, the Coordinator cited the situation of the California sardine fishery. Because of the great decline, as compared with previous years, in production of canned sardines and mackerel, letters have been directed by the Coordinator to General Hershey, Selective Service head, and Manpower Commissioner Paul V. McNutt, recommending immediate deferment of fishermen and cannery workers for a period of 90 days. The proposed action would materially aid these fisheries between now and the end of February and should result in increased production. Operations are now at their height, and will be nearing completion about that time.

The Coordinator pointed out that general production of the fisheries has decreased drastically from 1941's record-breaking yields. Fifteen to 20 percent less tonnage has been forecast for 1942-43. "However, to produce a sea harvest in proportion demanded by the Government under present Lend-Lease commitments and domestic civilian needs," the Coordinator stated, "our fisheries should have topped 1941 production by at least 25 percent."